



DIVE BRIEF

Texas think tank petitions to revoke permits for Vineyard Wind 1 project offshore Nantucket

The Texas Public Policy Foundation petitioned the Trump administration to revoke the project's permission a day after Nantucket, Massachusetts, leaders issued their own set of demands.

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Reporter

A piece of fiberglass on a beach in Nantucket, following the August 2024 Vineyard Wind 1 blade break. Permission granted by Town of Nantucket Marine Department

Dive Brief:

- The Texas Public Policy Foundation, a conservative advocacy group, is hoping to use the Trump administration's latest actions against offshore wind to shut down construction of the 800-MW Vineyard Wind 1 off the coast of Nantucket.
- The foundation sent a petition to half a dozen federal agencies last week asking the administration to rescind the project's construction and operations plan. It was filed around the same time the Interior Department eliminated offshore wind energy areas set aside by the previous administration for future leases.
- Vineyard Wind 1 also continues to face opposition from the town of Nantucket, and town leadership last week sent the

project's developers a list of 15 demands intended to smooth relations between the town and the project.

Dive Insight:

As the Trump administration continues to review offshore wind projects already under construction, Texas Public Policy Foundation attorney Eric Heigis said in a release that the petition provides Interior Secretary Doug Burnum with “a golden opportunity to correct the previous administration’s missteps.”

The foundation sent its petition to the heads of the Department of Commerce, the National Marine Fisheries Service, the Department of Defense, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and its New England District, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management.

Vineyard Wind did not respond to a request for comment about the petition. The project is a joint venture between Avangrid Renewables and Copenhagen Infrastructure Partners.

“President Trump on his first day in office ordered ... the Secretary of the Interior to review all offshore wind leases in order to address legal deficiencies,” said Ted Hadzi-Antich, a senior attorney with the Texas Public Policy Foundation. “Our administrative petition sets forth those legal deficiencies in detail so that the Secretary is in a position to rescind the Construction and Operations Plan of the Vineyard Wind 1 project and to issue an order requiring that the entire area be remediated to the condition it was in prior to the approval of the COP.”

Trump said during his campaign that he felt offshore wind turbines are “horrible” and “destroy everything,” and vowed to make sure that the industry “ends on day one.”

A day before the petition was released, Nantucket leaders hosted a press conference July 29 to lay out the island's disputes with the project developers — including delays in alerting the town to a blade breakage last July, which caused debris to wash up on the beach, and delays in the installation of an Aircraft Detection Lighting System, which was completed Thursday.

The petition cites the 2024 blade breakage, which resulted in fiberglass pieces of the blade washing up on Nantucket beaches, as a prime reason for the COP to be rescinded. The blade was part of a GE Vernova Haliade-X turbine, and GE Vernova blamed the incident on a manufacturing deviation involving insufficient bonding.

The town of Nantucket reached a \$10.5 million settlement with GE Vernova last month. Vineyard Wind was indemnified by GE Vernova for the incident, and was not named in the settlement, the Nantucket Current reported.

During the July 29 press conference, Nantucket Select Board member Brooke Mohr made public the town's fifteen demands for Vineyard Wind which she said would "bring it into compliance with its obligations and public commitments," and invited project developers to "respond to this full set of demands within two weeks ... That is, by August 12."

The fifteen demands include timely alerts to town officials in the event of an emergency, monthly updates presented to the Select Board, responses to written Select Board questions returned in three business days, and the payment of various damages, including the establishment of a "\$10 million escrow fund to ensure coverage of cleanup costs from future failures."

"The town retains all of its options, which could include litigation to enforce the agreement, public and political advocacy, along with

a range of things,” said Greg Werkheiser, legal counsel to the town of Nantucket for offshore wind matters.

Select Board Chair Dawn Hill said that she wouldn’t sign the town’s Good Neighbor Agreement with the project if she were presented with it today.

Vineyard Wind has “been way more impactful” than anticipated, she said. “This is much more detrimental than it should have been.”

These impacts include red aircraft lights from the turbines, visible off the coast, which Vineyard Wind says it addressed July 31 with the completion of an Aircraft Detection Lighting System – “a radar-activated lighting system that activates the FAA required lighting only when planes are within a specified distance of wind turbines [and] reduces the nighttime lighting of offshore wind projects while complying with federal aviation safety requirements,” Vineyard Wind said.

Speaking before the completion of the ADLS, Werkheiser said that Nantucket residents “have dealt with dozens of red lights constantly blinking throughout the night sky” since January 2024.

“Since the immediate aftermath of the blade failure and since the last presidential election, Vineyard Wind’s leadership has essentially gone into hiding,” Mohr said. “We believe that they are concerned about the change in policy at the federal level and drawing scrutiny from the new administration, which has ordered a review of offshore wind permitting practices.”

“However,” she added, “hiding is not the solution to their problems, nor is it the solution to our problems.”